



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 112th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 157

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2011

No. 25

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, the hope of the world, let Your kingdom come. Let Your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.

Fill the minds of our lawmakers with Your truth so that they will labor for freedom with integrity and compassion. Lord, use them to establish Your rule in the life of our Nation. May they be guides who lead us away from sin, sorrow, and destruction, toward truth, justice, and peace. Shelter them in their coming in and going out, in their labor and leisure, as they seek to advance Your kingdom.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 16, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E.

GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following any leader remarks, there will be a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each. That time will be equally divided and controlled between the leaders or their designees.

At 11 this morning, the Senate will resume consideration of the FAA authorization bill. As a result of cloture being filed yesterday, any germane first-degree amendments must be filed at the desk prior to 1 p.m. today in order for the amendments to be in order postcloture. We have the opportunity to complete this legislation tomorrow. There will be two cloture votes in the morning. We hope to be able to have some votes today. Senators will be notified when rollcall votes are scheduled.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

SPENDING FREEZE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, as the debate over government spending comes into focus this week, I think it is worth noting once again how this debate has shifted in recent weeks.

After 2 years of bailouts and stimulus bills, we are finally talking about how much government should cut instead of how much it should spend.

Obviously, the details matter. And we will be working those out in the weeks ahead. But the fact that this debate has shifted is a testament to the millions of Americans who insisted that their voices be heard on this issue. They have made a difference. It is important we acknowledge that.

Now the question shifts to whether those in power will actually follow through in any serious way. Will Democratic leaders in Washington really do something to rein in a government we can no longer afford or will they just pretend to and hope the American people focus on their words instead of their actions.

Unfortunately, the early signs are discouraging.

The President's response to the growing national alarm about spending and debt was a proposal to freeze government spending at the already-irresponsible levels that he himself has set over the past 2 years—levels that, if maintained, will only intensify the current crisis by putting us deeper and deeper in debt.

The consensus on the President's proposal is that it is both unserious and irresponsible, and that, despite what the President may say, he is not in fact treating this crisis with the seriousness it demands. The President even seemed to concede the point yesterday, saying his budget wasn't adequate to the task and suggesting that maybe Congress could do something more meaningful than he has.

And what do we find in Congress?

Well, we find one party in the House of Representatives making a genuine effort to cut spending and debt, and we find Democrats in the Senate announcing today that they intend to line up behind the President's timid proposal for a partial spending freeze.

In other words, Democratic leaders in Congress intend to join the President

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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S765